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AVENGED.

BY ORPHEUS C. KERR.

God's scales of justice hang between
The deed unjust, and the end unseen,
And the sparrow's fall in the air is weighed
By the Lord's own hand, in the ether laid.

In the prairie path to our sunset gate,
In the flow'ring heart of a new-born State,
Are the hopes of an old man's waning years,
'Neath headstones worn with an old man's tears.

When the bright sun sinks in the rose-lipped West,
His last red ray is the headstone's crest;
And the mounds he laves in a burning flood
Are a soldier's wealth, baptized in blood.

Do ye ask who reared those headstones there
And crowned with thorns a sire's gray hair?
And by whom the land's great debt was paid
To the soldier's old, in the graves they made?

Shrink, Pity! shrink, at the question dire;
And, Honor, burn in a blush of fire!
Turn, Angel, turn from the page thine eyes,
Or the sin, once written, never dies!

They were men of the land he had fought to save
From a foreign foe that had crossed the wave,
When his sunlit youth was a martial song,
And shook a throne as it swelled along.

They were sons of a clime whose soft, warm breath
Is the soul of earth, and a life in death;
Where the Summer dreams on the couch of Spring,
And the songs of birds through the whole year ring;

When the falling leaf is the cup that grew
To catch the gems of the new leaf's dew,
And the winds that through the vine-leaves creep
Are the sighs of time in a pleasant sleep.

But there lurked a taint in the clime so blest,
Like a serpent coiled in a ring dove's nest,
And the human sounds to the ear it gave
Were the clank of chains on a low-browed slave.

The soldier old, at his sentry post,
Where the sun's last trail of light is lost,
Beheld the slave of the land he loved,
And the old, old love in his bosom moved.

He cried to the land, Beware! beware
Of the symbolled curse in the bondman there!
And a prophet's soul in fire came down
To live in the voice of old John Brown.

He cried; and the ingrate answer came
In words of steel from a tongue of flame;
They dyed his hearth in the blood of kin,
And his dear ones fell for the nation's sin.

O, matchless deed! that a fiend might scorn,
O deed of shame, for a world to mourn,
A prophet's pay in his blood must dear,
And a land to mock at a father's tear.

Is't strange that the tranquil soul of age
Was turned to strife in a madman's rage?
Is't strange that the cry of blood did seem
Like the roll of drums in a martial dream?

Is't strange the clank of the Helot's chain
Should drive the wrong to the old man's brain,
To fire his heart with a Sauton's zeal,
And mate his arm to the soldier' steel.

The bane of wrong to its depth had gone,
And the sword of Right from its sheath was drawn;
But the cabined slave heard not its cry,
And the old man armed him but to die.

Ye may call him mad, that he did not quail
When his stout blade broke on the unblest mail;
Ye may call him mad, that he struck alone,
And made the land's dark curse his own;

But the eye of God looked down and saw
A just life lost by an unjust law;
And black was the day with God's own frown
When the Southern cross was a martyr's crown!

Apostate clime! the blood then shed
Fell thick with vengeance on thy head,
To weigh it down 'neath the coming rod,
When thy red right hand should be stretched to God.

Behold the price of the life ye took,
At the death ye gave, 'twas a world that shook;
And the despot deed that one heart broke,
From their slavish sleep a million woke!

Not all alone did the victim fall,
Whose wrongs first brought him to your thrall;
The old man played a nation's part,
And ye struck your blow at a nation's heart.

The freeman host is at your door,
And a voice goes forth with a stern "no more!"
To the deadly curse, whose swift redeem
Was the visioned thought of John Brown's dream,

To the country's wrong, and the country's stain,
It shall prove as the scythe to the yielding grain;
And the dauntless power to spread it forth
Is the freeborn soul of the chainless North.

From the East, and West, and North they come,
To the bugle's call and the roll of drum;
And a form walks viewless by their side—
A form that was born when the Old Man died.

The soldier old in his grave may rest,
Afar with his dead in the Prairie West;
But a red ray falls on the headstone there,
Like a God's reply to a Soldier's prayer.

He may sleep in peace 'neath the greenwood pall,
For the land's great heart hath heard his call;
And a people's will and a people's might,
Shall right the Wrong, and proclaim the Right.

The foe may howl at the fiat just,
And gnash his fangs in the trodden dust;
But the battle leaves his bark a mock,
And the Freeman's heel is on his neck.

Not all in vain is the lesson taught,
That a great Soul's Dream is the world's new Thought;
And the scaffold marked with a death sublime
Is the Throne ordained for the coming time

MY YANKEE WIFE.

So then, my dear John, you have heard that I have had the temerity to take unto myself a wife, and you want to know "all the ins and outs of the matter." Well, I suppose you must be gratified, though I have a strong suspicion, that you are disposed to make use of me as a sort of "feeler," for your own private and personal ends.

Do you remember, when we were boys together, living at your uncle George's, among the rice swamps and alligators, "away down upon the Suwanee river," how you always managed to get me to go into the water to bathe first, so that I might make a report of the state and condition of things before you ventured to trust your dainty person to the waves and currents? Remember it? To be sure you do. And I think you have a little of that same old leaven in you yet, prompting you to cajole me into giving you an account of my plunge into the waters of matrimony, before making the same experiment yourself. Be that as it may, I will not refuse to give you the benefit of my experience, whatever use you may design to make of it.

I have not only had the courage to marry a woman, but a Yankee woman; and not only a Yankee woman, but a Yankee teaching woman, a "school-marm," as some of her northern friends would call her. You know, that when I go to Savannah, I generally make it a point to spend a day or two with our old schoolfellow, Joe Compton, of Bryan. It was on a beautiful autumnal evening, last year, that riding slowly up the avenue through old Colonel Compton's lawn, I first saw Pauline Smith, and then and there was I so effectually smitten, that in fifteen minutes I had made up my mind to induce that young lady, if possible, to change her ubiquitous surname for one not quite so common.—The first sentence she uttered contained the word *sir*, and I very well knew that the *r* with which she terminated it could come only from a northern tongue. Two minutes afterwards, she told me that she was a teacher in Colonel Compton's family. Thus, on the very threshold of our acquaintance, she had two of my pet prejudices up in arms against her; but there was a fascination about her which neutralized them both before I was quite conscious of their existence.

This time, my visit was somehow lengthened out to weeks instead of days, and before I left the hospitable domain of "Medway Bank," I was betrothed to Pauline. I made but little inquiry about her family. She gave me to understand, however, that her father was a plain farmer in the State of Connecticut, with more sons and daughters than he knew well what to do with. Being very much in love, I paid but little attention to what I regarded as extraneous matters, and hurried on the wedding with all possible expedition. Having neither father nor mother, nor, in fact, any near relative to consult, the preliminaries were speedily settled, and, after a very short courtship, Pauline Smith became Mrs. Albert Wrenshaw, of "Liveoaks," Georgia.

One reason for hastening my marriage was, that I had business in New York which would require my almost immediate presence there. I was not willing to defer the great event until my return, and it would be an excellent opportunity for Pauline and myself to visit our friends in Connecticut. So it was decided, that we should set out for the North the second week after our marriage. Unfortunately, however, the very day preceding our departure, Pauline sprained one of her ankles so badly, that it was found to be impossible for her to travel. This was a serious disappointment, but there was no help for it, and I was obliged to go alone, and leave my lovely bride long before the honeymoon began to wane. One of Joe Compton's sisters was with us, and I persuaded her to remain at Liveoaks till my return.

I had already visited the city of New York a number of times. It was no novelty to me, and I soon grew weary of the din and dirt, which on previous occasions I had hardly noticed. I was very anxious to get home, but a visit to my wife's relations was indispensable. Accordingly, so soon as my business was completed, I started by railroad, for the rural districts of Connecticut. Up to this moment, I had thought very little about my new connections, but now that I was upon the point of coming into contact with them, I began to feel a little nervous, and to form a good many speculations as to what manner of people they might turn out to be. I was no great admirer of the Yankee race in general, but I felt sure that the near relatives of my Pauline could not be otherwise than agreeable.

It was still early in the day when I reached the village of Woodville, near which I was to find the family I was in search of. Opposite to the place where the train of cars had halted stood an old-fashioned building, with an exceedingly dilapidated picture, probably meant for General Washington, swinging over the front door.—Here I entered, and, after relieving myself of the dust of the railroad, inquired of the landlord if he could direct me to the house of Judson Smith, which I had been given to understand was somewhere in the neighborhood.

"Oh, yes," replied the proprietor of the Washington Hotel, "it's just over the top of the hill there; a yaller house with a Morellor cherry-tree in front on it; you can't miss it."

Thanking him for his information, I sallied forth to call upon my respected father-in-law. Before reaching the top of the hill which had been pointed out to me, I had apparently passed beyond the outskirts of the village, and when I arrived at the hollow on the other side, I saw, close upon the road, a yellow house with a very forlorn looking cherry-tree in front of it, evidently the abode of Judson Smith. I had been prepared to find a somewhat rustic homestead, but, with every possible desire to be pleased with the birthplace of my Pauline, I could not help feeling disappointed The house was not merely rustic, but mean-looking, and of extremely contracted proportions for so large a family as that which I knew must inhabit it.

Like one who has made up his mind to take a cold water bath, I determined not to stand loitering on the brink, but to make the plunge at once. The front door was open, and a large, coarse, raw-boned, red-faced woman stood a little way inside, staring at me with all her might, while half a dozen dirty children, with mouths wide open and eyes dilated, seemed trying, each one, to outstare the mother and the rest.

"Is this Judson Sm——?"

Before I had time to finish my inquiry the ready dame broke forth with great volubility, "To be sure it is, and I'm his wife—who mought you be?"

I was strongly tempted to beat a retreat forthwith, and leave this straightforward question unanswered; but I reflected how difficult it would be to account to Pauline for such a procedure, and, nerving myself to the trial which I felt was before me, I replied to her query by propounding another

"Have you not a daughter in Georgia?"

"A darter in Georgy?" cried Mrs. Judson Smith; "to be sure I have.—Our Paulie's in Georgy. What do *you* know on her?"

"I am her husband."

"Our Paulie's husband! Oh, git out, man—you're a jokin.'"

"I am perfectly serious, madam, I assure you," (and so I was, most confoundedly serious.) "Have you not been informed of your daughter's marriage?"

"Lor', yes! But who'd have thought of her ever marryin' sich a lookin' fellow as you. Dew tell! Wal, I want to know! And be you raly my son-in-law?"

"Positively, yes. It is not quite four weeks since we were married."

"Dew tell! Wal, raly, now, you don't look as if you could 'arn your victuals and clothes. What mought you do for a livin'?"

"Very little of anything, madam."

"Jist exacly what I thought. You never could have done no work, to speak on, with them saft-lookin' hands."

I admitted the "saft impeachment." The old lady looked actually savage, but at length a new idea seemed to strike her.

"What shiny boots! And what a slick-lookin' coat! May be you're a gambler?"

"No, madam. I'm a planter—a farmer."

"Oh, git out! You never farmed nor planted nauthin' with them hands."

I was resolved to keep cool, if possible, and I had entered the house with the determination to treat my parents-in-law with dignified propriety, under all circumstances; but it must be confessed that I was beginning to feel a little unamiable, and in order to get upon safer ground, I assured Mrs. Smith that her daughter should want for nothing, and then proceeded to make some allusion to the children, who still formed a gaping circle round the chair in which I had seated myself without an invitation. This operated so as to turn the tide in another direction, and a formal presentation to the family group followed.

"Here, gals and boys, shake hands with your brother Abraham—your name's Abraham, I b'lieve?"

"No, Madam. My name is Albert."

Lor' me! Wal, I was sure it was Abraham, or Abel, or somethin' like that. But never mind, a mistake's not haystack. This big gal here is Jerushy, and this red-headedest one of all (e'en a'most all on 'em, is on the foxy order,) is Jemimy Ann, and them two, with their eyes all black and blue, is the twins, Caster and Pollix. They do tell me that Caster and Pollix is boy's name by rights; but my old man tuck a fancy to 'em, and give 'em to the gals. They're twins' names, and Scripter names, I b'lieve. They're right down good lookin' gals, but the peaky critturs is so ugly that they fight like cat and dog e'en a'most every time my back's turned. These here two little fellers is named Pardon and Increase, arter their two grand-daddies; and that's all that's to hum; but there's two more gals that's out for helps, and three more boys that's with the old man at the shop. That makes eleven, and one that died and Paulie jist makes up the baker's dozen."

What might be the meaning of being "out for helps" I did not know; but these girls were unquestionably the sisters of my gentle Pauline. I was absolutely stunned—struck dumb with mingled amazement and vexation; and I endured, in unresisting silence, the vigorous shakes of the huge dirty paws of my delectable sisters, and the fingers of the smaller but still dirtier cubs, their brothers. Could I really be awake and in the possession of my senses? Had not some horrid dream, some hideous nightmare, usurped possession of my faculties? Alas! it was a sad reality, and I must teach myself to bear it with such fortitude as I could command.—The bitterest thought of all was that Pauline had deceived me. If she had given me the least hint of the true state of the case, even after our marriage, the mortification, the misery I may call it, of this visit would have been spared me. And that convenient sprained ankle, too, just in the nick of time to prevent her from accompanying me. Could I ever forgive her this duplicity?

While thoughts like these were coursing through my brain, a rickety table had been hauled out into the centre of the floor, by the twin maidens, Castor and Pollix, and a cloth, all soiled and greasy, had been spread upon it. During the performance of this operation, a quarrel arose between them, and the modern representatives of Leda's children were soon engaged in a sparring match. Castor, like her namesake of immortal descent, seemed to be no mean proficient in the "art of self-defence," and was in a fair way to give Pollix's eye a fresh suit of mourning, when a vulgar looking man, with the dirtiest face I had yet seen, sprang through the doorway, and commenced cuffing the belligerents with such hearty good will that their yells of rage soon changed to yells of pain, and both speedily disappeared by the back door, into some invisible region beyond it.

As I feared, the man with the superlatively dirty face proved to be my Pauline's father. It seemed that he was Smith by occupation as well as by name, as were also three grown sons, who speedily followed him from the shop, a few rods distant from the house. I looked anxiously at each one as he entered, hoping to discern some trace of education and good feeling, if not of refinement; but all was blank—a hopeless waste of brute-like stolidity, with the predominating animal expression stamped on every countenance. Leaving out the father, it was hard to say which was the least dirty, least stupid and mean-looking of the set.

Having been introduced to them all, I was agitating in my own mind the question how I should escape the dinner, which "loomed up" more and more threateningly every moment, when one of the younger children burst into the room, in breathless haste, crying:

"Oh! what do you think? Our Paulie's come home! She got out o' the cars just a minute ago, and told me to run down here and tell you all how that she was a comin' here direc'ly!"

"I want to know!" shouted the whole generation with one breath. I said nothing; but I certainly did "want to know" what could possibly bring my wife to Connecticut, under such circumstances, as sincerely as could well be imagined.

The ejaculations of the family had hardly subsided when the door flew open, and in bounced—not my Pauline, nor anything like her, but a tall, awkward, raw-boned girl, bearing a strong resemblance to the females of the blacksmith's household. After certain uncouth and not over-affectionate salutations, Mrs. Smith cried out:

"Paul, you tarnation good-for-nauthin' critter—don't you see your husband?"

"Husband! Where?"

"Why, there, you 'tarnal fool, there!" pointing meanwhile at your humble servant.

"That my husband! I never seed the feller afore in all my life. My husband, Abraham Stooks, is hard at work in the cotton-mill, in Augusty, Georgy. He'd make two or three o' that slim saplin.'"

"Who, on airth, are you then?"

This interrogatory was addressed by the old woman to the "slim saplin'" aforesaid, and it must be confessed that the vegetable phenomenon thus apostrophized was hardly in a condition to tell who he was, so bewildered and obfuscated was he by what he had just seen and heard.—Not that he felt offended at the epithet which had been applied to him, for at that particular moment he might have been called a chincopin-bush without a thought of resentment.

The fact is, some notion of what afterwards proved to be the true state of the case began to dawn upon my mental horizon, though how to explain the apparent inconsistencies and contradictions of the affair was utterly beyond my power. At length, however, an explanation took place, and the mystery was found to be easily unravelled.

As you have doubtless anticipated, I had, to use the words of the young lady from Augusta, "cotched the wrong sow by the ear." It seems that the landlord of the Washington Hotel had understood me to inquire for Judson, the smith, meaning the blacksmith to whose house he directed me. This individual was naturally suggested to his mind rather than the Judson Smith I was seeking, who lived several miles from Woodville, and with whom he had very little acquaintance; while Judson *the* smith was a regular toper at his bar, and therefore very familiarly known to him. You will remember that when I asked, or rather began to ask, the blacksmith's wife if that was Judson Smith's domicile, she did not wait to hear the whole of my question, but took it for granted that her husband was the person inquired for. Perplexed and annoyed as I was, I never thought of entertaining a doubt as to the identity of these people with the Judson Smith, and if I had, the coincidence of the daughter married in Georgia would have dispelled it, particularly when I heard her called, as I supposed, Paulie or Pauline, never thinking that it might be Polly, which was the fact. Polly Judson, it appeared, had gone to Augusta, Georgia, to work in a cotton factory, and had there married Abraham Slooks, a Massachusetts man, who had also gone South to seek his fortune. The Judson family, I afterwards learned, were not only eminently vulgar but notoriously vicious, and about the very last beings on earth that a decent man would wish to be connected with.

You know how comfortable one feels as he awakes from a frightful dream and sees vanishing into nonentity all those hideous phantoms, which, but a minute before, he had regarded as unquestionable realities. Precisely similar were my feelings as I bade a joyful adieu to the Judsons, and retraced my steps to the village. True, I had yet to undergo the ordeal of a visit to the real Judson Smiths; but, in any event, I felt sure that they would gain in comparison with the blacksmith and his family.

That same evening I procured a horse and rode out to the house of my father-in-law. I will not dwell upon the particulars of my visit. Suffice it to say, that I found the Simon Pure Judson Smiths the antipodes in every respect of the Judsons of Woodville. The old gentleman was a white-haired patriarch, with a well-ordered household, seven well-behaved sons and daughters, besides Pauline, and a nice motherly little wife, who looked almost as young as her grown-up and married daughters. The farm on which they lived was small but admirably cultivated, and, with industry and good management, yielded enough for the maintenance and education of the young ones until they became old enough to take care of themselves.

Two stalwart sons, one a little older and the other a little younger than Pauline, being still unmarried, did most of the work. They were thorough masters of their business, and relieved their father of nearly all the care and toil which had been the companions of his earlier years. In short, there was a mingled simplicity and intelligence about the whole family which could hardly fail to please one much more particular than myself. Since my adventure at the blacksmith's, I had been in a mood to be "thankful for small favors." After a much longer visit than I had originally intended to make, I took leave of my new connections, and returned to Georgia and Pauline, more deeply in love than ever.

Thus, dear John, you have in brief the salient points of my matrimonial experience.